



News From

JACK DOYLE

MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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SENECA PARK ZOO'S ELEPHANT TO PARTICIPATE IN BREEDING PROGRAM

Elephant Conservation Gets Help from County

Monroe County Executive Jack Doyle today announced that Genny C, the 26 year old African elephant at the Seneca Park Zoo, will participate in the American Zoo and Aquarium Association's (AZA) African Elephant species survival program. Efforts last fall to inseminate Genny C failed but doctors will try again this week. The AZA committee recently approved the artificial insemination of Genny C, one of Monroe County's two female African elephants.

"I am told that Genny C has been doing well since our last attempt at insemination and is in prime condition to become a mother," said Doyle. "With an aging elephant population and just 211 female and 35 male African elephants in North America, it is understandable why there is an urgency for zoos to promote breeding programs," he said. "Monroe County and the Seneca Park Zoo are pleased to join the AZA in this important undertaking to aid the growth of African elephants in North America."

Without breeding programs, it has been projected that the North American elephant population will decline over the next 40 years to just 13 females with the majority of them becoming too old to breed.

"Seneca Park Zoo is the only zoo in New York State to exhibit the endangered African elephant and we are committed to doing our part," said Doyle. "As an AZA accredited institution, we are not only dedicated to the animals in our care, but to the conservation of wildlife and habitats everywhere."

Since Seneca Park Zoo does not house a male elephant, the zoo veterinary staff will artificially inseminate Genny C. Artificial insemination is safe and proven successful with the birth of five elephant babies in North America and Europe.

Dr. Jeff Wyatt, the Zoo's veterinarian, invited the world famous Veterinarian Dr. Dennis Schmitt to assist in the artificial insemination. After 10 years of research, Dr. Schmitt was the first person to successfully use artificial insemination in elephants. Dr. Schmitt's first elephant calf created by artificial insemination weighed 278 pounds at birth in November 1999.

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County Aids Elephant Population

Dr. Schmitt is a professor at Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri and is a diplomat of the American College of Theriogenology. He travels the world examining and assisting reproduction of elephants in zoos and in the wild. He has also trained other veterinarians, including Seneca Park Zoo's Dr. Wyatt, in specialized techniques to assist elephants with reproduction.

Genny C will be inseminated with samples collected from donor bull elephants from Disney Animal Kingdom in Orlando, Florida; Lion Country Safari in Loxahatchee, Florida; and Riddle's Elephant Sanctuary near Little Rock, Arkansas. The semen samples are flown to Rochester daily for two consecutive days of insemination.

Elephants ovulate every three months and are pregnant for 22 months. The Zoo staff will not know for certain if Genny C is pregnant until November, 2003. If Genny C becomes pregnant, she will give birth in the spring of 2005.

"The Board of Trustees, Seneca Park Zoo Society staff and volunteers fully support this effort," said Rachel August, director of the Zoo Society. "It would give us great joy to welcome an elephant calf to our Zoo."

The Seneca Park Zoo is owned and operated by Monroe County. The Seneca Park Zoo Society is a not-for-profit organization that has, since 1957, provided education, fundraising, special events and public relations support to Monroe County's Seneca Park Zoo. The Zoo is open 364 days each year, closing only on the first Saturday in June for Zoobilation. The Zoo is located at 2222 St. Paul Street, ½ mile north of Route 104. For information on the Seneca Park Zoo Society membership or other programs, please call (585) 467-WILD (or visit the Zoo's web/site at www.senecazoo.org.)

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